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religion: 11

At the time of the Spanish Conquest Tepoztlán had been under the domination and influence of the Aztecs for about one hundred years, and had absorbed much of Aztec culture. Tepoztecans paid homage to Aztec gods and practiced the Aztec rites of human sacrifice. But before the conquest by the armies of Tenochtitlán, Tepoztecans worshipped the more benign gods of the Toltecs which did not involve human sacrifice. As late as 1580, Tepoztecans still conserved the memory of this pre-Aztec period. This is learned from the oft-cited *Relación de Tepuztlan* of 1580, containing the following passage on Tepoztecan religion:

> That anciently they made offerings to their gods, of paper, quail, wild pigeons and copal, until the Mexicans came; then they observed their customs. When they went to war they cut through the heart [of prisoners] and offered them to their gods; they [the prisoners] belonged to those who had captured them. When it began to thunder and they wanted rain they bought two or three small children, took them to a high peak, and when it began to rain and thunder they tore out the heart and the blood was offered to the rains so that it would rain much; for this purpose they would first keep the bought children for thirty or forty days; in the case of an adult, on the day he was sacrificed they dressed him very well and they led him singing and dancing unto where the idol stood and there, having invited many neighboring villagers, since it was a great fiesta, they drank and slit open his breast and tore out the heart and the blood and offered him to the gods; and they threw the body down below and later they cut up the body and offered pieces of it to the warriors.[1]

Here we find a description of a typical Aztec ceremony very similar to the description by Sahagún. This indicates that the rain god, Tlaloc, and the war god, Huitzilopochtli, were worshipped in Tepoztlán before the Conquest. To the first, children were sacrificed; to the second, adults.

But Tepoztlán also had its own special cult of Ometochtli (Two Rabbits), the god of pulque (Fig. 49) whose fame extended throughout the Aztec empire. Indeed, Tepoztlán was a very important religious center during this time. A sixteenth century Dominican chronicler tells us that Ometochtli was a

[1] *Relación*, p. 241.

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fused old Aztec concepts with those of the Catholic Church. His figure is also confused with the god, Ometochtli, so that today he is known as El Tepozteco, god of the wind and son of the Virgin Mary. For Tepoztecans the Catholic Trinity is viewed as a combination of three distinct gods, and the cross is a magical symbol which has no relation to the death of Jesus. Tepoztecans continue to fear omens, evil spirits, and *los aires*. When they are in dire need of rain they pray to El Tepozteco for aid.

The growth of Catholicism and the church in Tepoztlán was rapid. When the first mass baptisms of the Tepoztecans occurred, no priests resided permanently in Tepoztlán, but a few years later the natives began to petition for the construction of a church in the town, since they did not want to be dependent upon the services of the priests from Yautepec or Oaxtepec. We do not know the exact date of the construction of the first church in Tepoztlán. However, in the *Relación* of 1580 we are told that the church had already been established:

> There is in this village a monastery of Dominican friars with three friars who administer the sacraments and that at the beginning they did not have any priest in this town and that they came from Yautepec and Guaxtepeque to baptize and confess the people, and that in the time of the Viceroy Luis de Velasco they asked for priests since many had died without confession and without baptism and so it was ordered that a monastery be built and the village did so at its own cost.[4]

Since the Viceroy Luis de Velasco was in office from 1550 to 1564, it must be supposed that the construction of the Tepoztecan church began during that time.

The Dominicans in Tepoztlán, while occupied in carrying out the administrative measures of the viceroy and in arousing in the natives respect for the Spanish authorities, also attempted to extirpate all pre-Hispanic cults. The Dominicans were especially vigorous in their attacks upon the native priests whom they regarded as witches, and upon the ancient idols which were instruments of the devil. One of their first objectives was to destroy the great image of Ometochtli, situated at the top of a mountain overlooking the village.[5]

Father F. Domingo de la Anunciación ordered the idol hurled over the cliff to show the natives that it could be smashed, hoping thus to destroy their faith in the power of the god. Despite the great height from which the idol fell, it remained intact. However, with the aid of prayers, exorcisms, and large hammers, the priests managed to break the stone.

According to our informants, when the idol fell it made a terrible noise which put fear into the spectators. When it did not break, alarm spread among the Indians and many would have defended their god had it not been for the presence of Spanish soldiers. After the destruction of the image, Tepoztecans lived in fear of the vengeance of the god. Tradition has it that Ometochtli ran through the streets at night crying and bemoaning the fate of the Tepoztecans at the hands of the con-

[4] *Relación*, p. 245.

[5] Remains of the temple and the stairway still exist in Tepoztlán, and attract many tourists.

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castillo, in the shape of a bull, is most often used. Entertainment may also be supplied by a *jaripeo*, which is a type of rodeo devoted to a display of roping and mounting bulls. Music may be supplied by a band of hired musicians, and some fiestas include groups of religious dancers. Finally, all in the barrio, except the poorest families, prepare a meal of *mole* and other festal dishes and entertain visitors from other barrios or villages. Those who participate in a fiesta, dress in their best clothing, often purchasing new clothing for this annual occasion.

Barrio fiestas and some village-wide fiestas are supported by popular subscriptions which are more in the nature of voluntary taxes. The *mayordomo* of each fiesta collects the money in a ceremony called the *Moxotlaloyan y Cerapah* at the place where the money for candles for the church is paid. A similar payment is made for the *castillo*, either at the same time or, in some cases, in a separate ceremony called the *castillopah*. This ceremony is usually held one day after the fiesta so as to collect the *limosna* a year in advance. The amount paid is generally fifty centavos, or one peso, according to how much had been promised to the *santo* the year before. The people, who had been reminded earlier of the coming payment by the *huehuechique* or *limosnero*, convene at the *mayordomo's* house to leave their money. Upon payment, each receives a portion or two, according to the amount contributed, of *mole verde*, tamales, and a drink called *tepache*.[8] Contributions are carefully recorded and there have been few cases of misuse of these funds.

The calendar of religious fiestas is a typical Catholic calendar which includes moveable and fixed fiesta days. The dates upon which many of the fiestas fall are calculated from the key date, Ash Wednesday.[9]

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND BELIEFS

Just as the cycle of religious fiestas in Tepoztlán follows Catholic practice, with some local modifications, so does the individual Tepoztecan. Only a few persons, mostly women, in the village fulfill all the ritual and other obligations set by the priest and church. These people are looked upon by the rest as fanatics who are "always dressing the saints." The priest does not consider his flock to be "good Catholics." The older people maintain a respectful passivity toward most church activities, while the adult males and many older youths, although not irreligious, tend to scoff at the nuns, the Acción Católica and other "fanatics." Among these recalcitrants there is much more interest in the barrio fiestas and one or two of the nearby village fiestas than in the regular daily and weekly religious acts which are required of them. On the other hand, the nuns and the religious associations tend to emphasize the latter. The school, too, so far unsuccessfully, discourages attending fiestas because of the disastrous effects upon school attendance. Regular participation in church ritual is associated with becoming "more cultured." Those who go to boarding schools or who have occasion to live in Mexico City for some time

[8] This ceremony has been described in detail by Redfield, *Tepoztlán*, pp. 99-100.

[9] See Appendix D, "Fiesta Calendar of Tepoztlán," p. 458. For a more detailed description of the fiestas, see Redfield's chapter, "A Tepoztecan Book of Days," in *Tepoztlán*, pp. 83-132.

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771 learn to attend Mass, to confess, and to take communion more often than is customary in the village.

788 Prayers for various occasions are memorized by Tepoztecans. The older generation learn them in Náhuatl, the younger in Spanish. The people do not know how [782] to improvise prayers, and when their memory fails they prefer to keep silent, or merely cross themselves, or kiss a scapulary to invoke the protection of the appropriate saint. The obligatory morning prayers are seldom said with regularity. Some of the old people still say a prayer at noon when the bell of the municipal clock strikes; the men remove their hats and give thanks to God because they still have strength to work. When the evening church bell rings, the men are again supposed to take off their hats and the women to kneel to give thanks because the day has passed without mishap. We cannot estimate the number of people who fulfill the latter obligation, but in all the time we were in the village we never observed anyone kneeling in prayer outside the church. But men returning home from the fields lift their hats respectfully whenever they pass a cross, and on the bus from Tepoztlán to Cuernavaca all hats go up in unison each time a church is passed. [782] Some Tepoztecans recite prayers on special occasions, such as planting corn, lighting a charcoal furnace, or pruning a tree.

794 As indicated earlier, most Tepoztecans do not feel strongly the need to attend 796 Mass every Sunday or even on holy days. On the basis of our own observations and informants' estimates, it appears that, on the average, about two hundred, mostly women, attend church on Sundays. The 6:00 A.M. Mass is preferred; those who attend the 8:00 A.M. Mass risk being called lazy. Mass, like other public gath- [883] erings, is a welcome form of diversion. It is one of the opportunities for sweethearts to see one another; young people are said to attend not out of devotion but to flirt. [292] Everyone puts on his best clothes for Mass. The older men wear huaraches, white *calzones*, and shirts; the youths wear trousers and modern shirts, and many wear jackets. The women use *rebozos* to cover their heads. Upon entering the church, [788] the women cross themselves with holy water and take seats up toward the front. The men generally do not cross themselves and remain in the rear. Some of the youths stand at one side of the nave, leaning against the pillars so as to be able to see the girls during the service. The children sit with their mothers and sisters. Five- and ten-centavo pieces are dropped into the plate passed by the sacristan.

After Mass the young men are the first to leave. They remain at the church door, talking, joking, and laughing quietly among themselves, until the girls appear. The [273] older men are the next to leave the church, and then the women. Most of the men go off to drink, while the women go home in little groups of relatives.

527 Tepoztecans do not rigorously observe Sunday or other holy days as days of 796 rest. During planting and harvesting, everyone works in the fields, and the storekeepers in the center who profit by the week-end tourist trade always work on Sundays and holidays. Informants say, "It is no sin to work on Sunday when it is done out of necessity." Some of the very old people believe that he who works on Sunday ruins himself economically for the rest of the week.

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Tepoztecans do not like to confess; the majority do so only once a year. Not giving much importance to sin, Tepoztecans do not regard confession as necessary. Most men consider confession important only when one is about to die but "with the pangs of death, who's going to remember to confess properly?" Women, particularly married women, are less reluctant to confess, and about fifty women are known to take communion and confess quite often. Through the Acción Católica the number of young people of both sexes who do this has increased. Perhaps the most important deterrent to confession, especially among the older people, is that the priest may exact from the confessor the recitation of certain prayers which most people cannot say accurately. Fearing a scolding from the priest, they prefer to avoid the situation. There is no such difficulty with communion. "We would all take communion more often if we didn't have to confess; that we always avoid."

In general, the Tepoztecan feels obliged to contribute to the church and does so by paying *limosnas*. There is a belief that he who refuses to give alms will find that no one receives his soul in heaven and that therefore he must go to hell. He who always gives alms finds that when he dies and his soul goes to heaven, "the Saint to whom he has given alms comes to receive the soul and intercedes with God to allow him to enter, and so he gets to heaven." Thus, when a Tepoztecan lights a candle to some saint or deposits a coin or two in the box, he considers himself deserving of the protection of that saint.

Tithes, which were obligatory and were collected by the government for the church before the Revolution, no longer exist. The local priest, however, hires a *limosnero* at harvest time to go about the fields, riding on a mule, to collect contributions from the farmers. As a rule, each farmer gives about twelve ears of corn, so that the priest collects a good amount for his stores.

Religious beliefs in Tepoztlán reflect Tepoztecan social character and world view. The profoundly practical nature of Tepoztecans precludes religious fantasy, mysticism, and any preoccupation with metaphysics; they seek from religion concrete solutions to problems of daily life and go about it in as direct a manner as their religion permits. Their religious world, like the world in which they live, is full of hostile forces and punishing figures which must be propitiated to secure good will and protection. The act of propitiation is direct and simple, consisting of giving something or doing something which is known to please a particular saint, such as lighting a candle, giving a few coins, offering flowers, burning incense, reciting a special prayer, or performing a certain dance; these offerings incur an obligation on the part of the recipient to favor the donor.

As in most mestizo communities in Mexico and Central America, Tepoztecan religious beliefs represent a fusion of Catholic and pagan elements. The people's concept of God is vague at best; the one characteristic which is clear to Tepoztecans is that he is a punishing God who acts in ways hostile to men. Most misfortunes are ascribed to him; good fortune rarely.

The Holy Trinity is viewed as consisting of three distinct gods. One is God the Father, who is usually pictured with a long, white beard and a large ball in his

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114 121 181 771 The second conclusion in the study in Yucatán showed a clear trend toward secularization.

> The conclusion has been reached that the city and town exhibit greater secularization than do the villages. The principal facts offered in support of this conclusion are . . . the separation of maize from the context of religion and its treatment simply as a means of getting food or money; the increase in the number of specialists who carry on their activities for a practical livelihood relative to those that carry on traditional activities which are regarded as prerogatives and even moral duties to the community; the change in the character of the institution of *guardia* whereby from being an obligation, religiously supported, to protect a shrine and a god it becomes a mere job in the town hall; the (almost complete) disappearance of family worship; the decline in the sacramental character of baptism and marriage; the conversion of the pagan cult from what is truly religious worship to mere magic or even superstition; the decline in the veneration accorded the santos; the change in the novena in which from being a traditional form expressive of appeal to deity it becomes a party for the fun of the participants; the alteration in the festival of the patron saint in which it loses its predominant character as worship and becomes play and an opportunity for profit; the separation of ideas as to the cause and cure of sickness from conceptions as to moral or religious obligation.[180]

114 121 181 243 771 The data from Tepoztlán does not enable a careful comparison on each of the cited points. However, much of the data is comparable and shows the trend toward secularization noted. The attitude toward corn in Tepoztlán combines both the secular and religious. Certainly corn is viewed as the basic crop, both for subsistence and for trade. But the religious aspects have not been entirely lopped off. The corn is still blessed in the church on San Isidro's day, and some families still burn incense in the home and address a prayer to the corn before planting. Some also make the sign of the cross when planting the first seed. Moreover, on the day of San Miguel, crosses are still placed at the four corners of the milpa to ward off the winds. From informants' accounts, it appears that these customs were more widespread before the Revolution. It is difficult to say how much change has occurred since 1926, for Redfield did not report on this subject.

114 121 181 463 The study of occupational changes and division of labor in Tepoztlán showed that most of the old "folk specialists" have continued and even increased in number, side by side with the increase in the new specialists. There were more *curanderos, chirimiteros,* fireworks makers and mask makers in 1944 than in 1926, and there seemed to be every indication that these occupations would continue. The only exceptions are the *huehuechiques,* who must be able to speak Náhuatl, and the *chirimiteros,* who are being displaced by the modern band. However, the rate of increase in what Redfield would call the secular specialists has been much greater than that of the "folk specialists." To this extent the independent findings for

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114 121 181 182 force the analysis into an organization-disorganization framework and neglect the possibility that there may exist different levels of organization in cultures. . . ." Neal Gross, "Cultural Variables in Rural Communities," *American Journal of Sociology,* Vol. LIV, No. 5 (March, 1948), pp. 348-450.

[180] *Ibid.,* p. 352.

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Yucatán and Tepoztlán agree. But it should be noted that before the Revolution there were more shoemakers, carpenters, saddle makers, and other artisans than in 1926 or in 1944. Were it not that we had specific historical information to explain this phenomenon, we might conclude that with increasing urban contacts there is a decrease in the number of specialists. The reason for this decrease has been, rather, the destruction of many neighboring haciendas which were formerly supplied by labor from Tepoztlán, and the abolition of the *cacique* class which offered a market for the products of the artisans.

In Tepoztlán there does not appear to have been any appreciable decline in the sacramental character of baptism and marriage. At any rate, both are considered important and are standard practices. Despite the legalization of secular marriage, church marriage is still considered the best marriage by most Tepoztecans.

Similarly there is no evidence of any decline in the veneration of the *santos;* the novena continues to be an appeal to the deity rather than a party for fun; the patron saints of the barrios are still regarded as protectors and are worshipped as such. Nor have barrio fiestas become primarily an occasion for profit. In fact, Tepoztecans do not show the marked commercial spirit reported in Mitla by Parsons, and in communities of the Guatemalan highlands by Sol Tax. Unlike Parsons' experiences in Mitla, we were never besieged by questions about the cost of things, nor did we ever witness Tepoztecans haggling among themselves or with strangers.

The third conclusion of the Yucatán study pertains to the trend toward individualization, or individualism as one goes from folk to urban. The specific facts found in the study of the four communities are given as follows:

> . . . . The relative decrease in importance of specialized functions which are performed in behalf of the community and the relative increase of specialties discharged for the individual's own benefit; the development of individual rights in land and in family estates; the diminution or disappearance of collective labor and of the exchange of services in connection with civic enterprises and religious worship; the decreasing concern of the family or of the local community in the making and the maintaining of marriages; the becoming less common of the extended domestic family; the lessening of emphasis and of conventional definition of the respect relationships among kin; the decline in family worship and the disappearance of religious symbols expressive of the great family; decrease in the tendency to extend kinship terms with primary significance for members of the elementary family to more remote relatives or to persons unrelated genealogically; the increasing vagueness of the conventional outlines of appropriate behavior towards relatives; the change in the nature of the marriage and baptismal rites so as less to express the linkage of the families and more to concern the immediate involved individuals only; the decline in relative importance of the santo patron of the local community; the suggested relation of the increase in sorcery to the separation of individuals, especially of women from the security of familial groups.[a]

Some of the items listed above were also listed under the categories of disorganization and secularization and have been treated earlier. The development of

[a] *Ibid.*, p. 355.

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177 in attitudes and values and in the quality of interpersonal relations. It is too
156 early to tell how deeply these changes have affected the ethos and character
571 of the villagers, but all signs point in the direction of more profound changes to follow. In 1956, Tepoztecans seemed on the whole more outgoing and
[609] friendly and less bothered by the presence of outsiders. Children were noisier and smiled more; they were as apt to run toward as away from a stranger. Indeed, they begged tourists for centavos. Small groups of unchaperoned
[882] adolescent girls laughing and talking together were not unusual sights, and occasionally a village girl might be seen walking side by side with a boy in broad daylight. In general, the villagers were more accepting of their sophis-
[476] ticated members and provincialism seemed to be on the wane. There was more competition for jobs and scholarships and in general display.

That Tepoztecans have more drive and ambition for self-improvement
[167] is obvious. The young people are restless and have found the courage to leave the village to look for better opportunities. They are making greater demands on their parents for education, and they have more confidence in and more ability to cooperate with people outside the family over longer periods of time.
177 Friendship not based on formal reciprocal relationships has become increas-
[572] ingly important; *compadrazgo* has assumed a new significance in providing
[608] connections and social advantages. Material success and a higher standard of
[556] living are consciously admired and worked for and the motivation to hide
[555] wealth is weaker. Respect has come to be based more and more on wealth and
[875] social status. Education imparts higher status; a young man or woman who has a teacher's certificate expects to be treated more respectfully by his or her
[771] elders. The middle class, especially, feel that status is also gained by discarding folk beliefs and practices and becoming more Catholic.

It is apparent, then, that Tepoztlán has made great strides ahead in
177 the past fifteen years. The changes have been uneven, however, and not all the
433 sectors of the population have equally benefited. Faced with limited agricultural resources, low yields, an absence of irrigation, and little prospect of solving their agricultural problems through mechanization, the villagers have by-passed their agrarian problem and have instead become dependent on new occupations and on jobs outside the village.

Most of the changes in the village are enjoyed by the middle economic
177 group which even in 1943 had shown the most initiative and interest in raising
556 its level of living. This group has doubled in size and now constitutes about
565 25 percent of the total population. Moreover, it is no longer merely an economic group; it is emerging rather as a true middle class, consisting of professionals, white-collar employees, and self-employed artisans and shopkeepers whose values and goals have come to differ substantially from those of the peasantry. The sharpening cleavage between the middle and lower economic groups, between peasant and nonpeasant, is perhaps the most far-reaching and significant change in the village.

Although the lower economic group is proportionately smaller than it
[434] was in 1943, it still constitutes the great majority of the villagers—approximately 65 percent. Our data suggest that this group has become even poorer, both because of inflation and because its members have been deprived of a tradi-